

USFA Y2K NEWSLETTER

Fire Service Represented at Roundtable

Our last edition of this newsletter focused on 911 issues but was distributed to our fire service mailing list as well. In that edition there was a summary of the *Public Safety Roundtable convened on July 7, 1999, by the President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion*. A number of fire service organizations were invited to participate in the Roundtable. The attendees included George Miller of the National Association of Fire Marshals, Gary Horewitz of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and Craig Sharman of the National Volunteer Fire Council.

Chief John Bergman of Lake Havasu Fire Department in Arizona was a member of the panel.

In addition, there were representatives of a variety of organizations representing law enforcement, emergency medical services, 911, corrections, traffic management, and home and building security.

The purpose of the meeting was to assess the Y2K readiness of the public safety sector and to increase communication among sector participants.

There was general agreement that Federal and State public safety organizations are relatively well prepared for the date change. However, there is uncertainty about the level of preparedness and contingency planning at the local level.

The full report and list of participants is available at the **President's Council website www.y2k.gov** //

Getting Ready for Y2K: A Workshop for
Emergency Management

Now available online at: fema.oov/v2k/v2k701.htm

USFA Y2K INFORMATION OFFICE

www.usfa.fema.gov/y2k/

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Y2K Personal Preparedness for the Emergency Services Provider

No organization – public or private – can accomplish its mission without their most valuable resource: people. Y2K contingency planning focuses mainly on manual workarounds in case of failure of our equipment and processes. Yet, who operates that equipment and functions within those processes? It's people. Think for a moment how ineffective your service organization would be without providers. What would happen if people chose to stay home and not come into their stations or offices? Even with employees on the job, how effectively will people function if their thoughts are focused on their family welfare instead of the task at hand? What steps can emergency service organizations take to alleviate any fear employees have of leaving their families in the midst of Y2K events or of being concerned with their welfare once they do?

The most important thing that any organization can do to minimize fear is to provide objective, open, and honest information regarding Y2K.

The second step necessary to minimize employee anxiety regarding Y2K and family concern is to assist and ensure that anyone seeking help with personal preparation activities receive it. It was former astronaut and current U.S. Senator John Glenn who said, "the greatest antidote to worry...is preparation." We are devoting resources to fixing and ensuring our equipment is ready – shouldn't we put *at least* that much energy into ensuring providers are ready?

The following information sources will assist you in preparing for Y2K on a personal and community level.

★ FEMA ★

www.usfa.fema.gov/y2k/index.htm

★ The American Red Cross ★

www.redcross.org/disaster/safety/Y2K.html

★ Arlington, Virginia Best Practice Site ★

www.co.arlington.va.us/y2k/persprep.htm

★ Federal Trade Commission ★

www.consumer.gov/y2k/

911 Readiness

Partnerships promote Y2K readiness in the public safety sector...

The USFA partnered with the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) and the Department of Justice to collect information from 911 centers during the first six months of 1999. All fifty states contributed to the survey.

USFA received over 2200 responses:

- 37% indicate Y2K compliance as of July 1, 1999.
- 55% predict compliance by the end of the year.
- In total, 92% expect to be ready before year-end.
- Only 55% have contingency plans in place.

The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) worked with the USFA to contact state Y2K coordinators to promote awareness of the Y2K compliance status of public safety answering points (PSAPS) and encourage action to address local readiness issues.

It is essential that providers and communities have backup plans to ensure public access to critical services in event of a disruption. //

Information Sources

White House Council on Year 2000 Conversion Emergency Services Working Group

www.fema.gov/y2k/y2k-em.htm

Senate Special Committee on the Y2K Technology Problem

www.senate.gov/~y2k/

Federal Emergency Management Agency Year 2000 Initiative

www.fema.gov/y2k/

United States Fire Administration

www.usfa.fema.gov/y2kfaq.htm

FCC Y2K Task Force

www.fcc.gov/year2000/

International Association of Emergency Managers

www.iaem.com/y2k.html

Best Practices States Map

www.fema.gov/y2k/bp_map.htm

Emergency Service Providers Prepare Their Communities for Y2K

If you have ideas to share, let us hear from you at the Y2K Information Center, (301) 447-1328.

HI – Honolulu Fire Department radio system and stations will become community emergency centers to handle emergency requests from citizens. HFD is coordinating efforts with public safety agencies. POC: Chief Attilio Leonardi (808) 831-7751

NY - Massena Fire Department started a Year 2000 Information Clearinghouse to assist citizens countywide. Briefings are available to volunteer fire organizations as well. Based on "lessons learned" following the '98 ice storm, the department is distributing emergency preparedness information and focusing on fire safety with alternative heat sources. They plan to use Fire Prevention Week and the new school year schedules to get the planning and preparedness messages out. Printed materials are being used in this rural area. Not all citizens have access to computers and web sites. POC: Mike Mayette, Firefighter-Engineer (315) 769-3408

PA - Fairfield Fire & EMS Department firefighters and EMS providers, with their families, will be ringing in the Y2K New Year at the fire station. The centralized gathering will enable fire and EMS personnel to be on standby at the station, without being away from family or missing the New Year celebration. This will also reduce responders' concerns for family needs and welfare if utilities are disrupted from Y2K impact. POC: Chief Gordon Sachs (717) 642-8842

WY – Jackson-Teton County Fire Department emergency preparedness/Y2K plan addresses the needs of community citizens in addition to the thousands of recreational visitors in the area. Their public information program targets visitors through the hotel/motel association. A multi-agency community effort will provide "24 hour kits" to school age students, and encourage families to duplicate the sample kit for each family member. Teton County Emergency Management has a Disaster Response Trailer with medical supplies and ancillary oxygen sources. It will be at the hospital staging area over New Year's. EMS personnel will be on scene throughout the night to answer questions and assist with transfer of residents with home medical equipment to "power centers" as necessary. POC: Fire Marshal Rusty Palmer, Director Teton EMS (307) 733-4732 //